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WAUKEGAN - With the necessary federal dollars in hand, officials stood beside an icy Waukegan Harbor on Monday and detailed work scheduled to begin in the spring that will both replace a 1920s-era water main and start removing the harbor's final remnants of PCBs.

Mayor Richard Hyde said the two projects, coupled with the clean-up and marketing of lakefront property, will transform the harbor in the near future.

"You're going to see 1,000, 2,000 or 3,000 boats down here, and they're going to come down here primarily because of this work," said Hyde, who was joined by U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, and officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in discussing the projects at the Waukegan Yacht Club.

The first task, to be paid for with a \$1.

4 million federal grant announced earlier this year, will remove a water main that dates back to at least 1928 and replace it with a new line more than 30 feet deeper in the harbor floor.

According to Harlan Doland of McClure Engineering Associates, the current main sits in the inner harbor and runs from the city's water plant across toward the yacht club.

Doland said tests in 1992 showed that area of the harbor to be around 18 feet deep, and the line runs only five to seven feet below the current floor. He added that the replacement project will consist of "directional drilling," with which the path for a new main is pushed through the sediment from the shoreline.

Waukegan Water Plant Supervisor Jeff Musinski said the equipment used in the drilling "is a monster - a lizard." He said the new main will provide more efficient service than the average homeowner might experience with a slight increase in water pressure.

Musinski added the planned 30-inch line will also give the city's water system more capacity, a point officials tout as allowing for development of lakefront residential sectors. The water main work is scheduled to start in or around March and take two to three months to complete.

Once the water main is in place, the Army Corps would be able to proceed with more extensive dredging of the inner harbor. Though a timeline for that work wasn't detailed Monday, Kirk said a \$2.6 million grant included in the 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations Act will be available for two years to use toward dredging.

"This spring would be a good time to get (the project) together, now that the federal money is on the table," said Kirk, a sentiment echoed by Hyde and Col. Gary Johnston of the Army Corps.

Most of the harbor was cleared of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) in the early 1990s, and areas that included the approach channel are dredged annually by the Corps to remove sand accumulated by wave action.

But PCB removal in the inner harbor was not completed, and the \$2.6 million is expected to cover what officials described as a "preliminary" dredging of remaining contaminated material. Estimates vary on how much money and time will be needed to both dredge out all the contaminants and find a final resting spot for them.

"It is a first step, and I'm not going to come up here and say it is going to be easy, but we're going to stay focused," Johnston said. "Some of us may never see the end results, but we're going to get started on it."

Waukegan Harbor is listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as one of 43 Areas of Concern along the Great Lakes in both the U.S. and Canada, with past industrial pollution prompting restrictions on "beneficial uses."

Other U.S. Areas of Concern include the Menominee River and Milwaukee Estuary in southeast

Wisconsin, and the Grand Calumet River south of Chicago.

Kirk said he would "like to see Waukegan become one of the first American sites to be de-listed," repeating past statements that the cleanup of Waukegan Harbor would add more than \$50,000 to the average value of Waukegan residences.